The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor unorganized in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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WHOLE NO. 1587 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1941 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 31, NO. 36

FACING *the* FACTS

With PHILIP PEARL

People don't start thinking until they feel the pinch of suffering. They don't start yelling until they are hurt. In our opinion, the new tax bill now under consideration by Congress is bound to promote a little thinking and a lot of yelling, and it's about time.

As tax measures go in this world of today, the one now being enacted here is extremely mild. In Great Britain, for instance, incomes in the higher brackets are being taxed to the extent of $4.75 out of each $5. Nothing nearly like that is contained in the revenue bill which Congress soon will adopt. Still, it is much harder than the old tax-paying habit to swallow than ever before and millions of persons in the low income group who were not heretofore taxed directly are going to have to kick in part of their pittances to the Government.

Again, we say, it's about time.

This may sound like heresy, but we think it is sound common-sense. For too long America has followed painless methods of financing the greatest war in history. For too long we have been putting off the day of reckoning. For too long we have concentrated on keeping comfortable. The only result has been that the people of our country are not as excited about the crisis the nation is facing as they should be. The bills still have to be paid.

We Can Take It

Let's see if we can make our meaning a bit clearer. Some of President Roosevelt's friends are complaining that the people are asking that they have to be waked up to the dangers confronting America, that they can no longer continue "business as usual," that the time for making real sacrifices is here.

We agree with them, except that we think the time for making these sacrifices has been too long delayed. We think that the American people would be more alert and more aroused today if a pay-as-you-go policy had been instituted from the beginning. We think the Government should have said to its citizens at the beginning: "This is going to hurt, but it's the only way we can be saved." We go back to our original text—people don't start thinking till they are hurt.

So, we personally are not going to yelp about the present tax bill even though it's going to hurt us just as much as the next one—if not more. When we know we are going to suffer pain, when we are forewarned in advance and when we are convinced it is for our own good, we can take it.

In our opinion, the American people are going to take it and like it—at least a lot better than they are going to like the tax bills of the future. These are going to be much harder than the present one—inevitably. We might just as well get used to taking punishment right now.

Important Victories Won

Everyone knows that in the end it's the common people who really pay the taxes. Even if they are not taxed directly, the burden of the taxes are passed on to them in higher prices and rents. So the five or six million persons who will pay income taxes for the first time next year because of lowered exemptions should realize that they are not being victimized more than usually.

In several respects, the American Federation of Labor won important victories in the tax bill finally adopted by the Senate. All proposals for payroll taxes and sales taxes were defeated. These forms of taxation constituted the chief threat to workers.

It was only just and proper that heavier tax rates be imposed on the middle and high income brackets. The "war prosperity" that is temporarily in our midst might otherwise create "war millionaires." The American people wouldn't stand for that again. We had enough of consienscienless profiteering in the last war. In normal times expansion of industry naturally should bring expansion of profits. But when America faces a crisis, business and industry should be ready to forego increased profits and be content with reasonable returns on investment.

In the same way, it would be fatal for workers to want or expect another "silk shirt" era. We believe that wage increases already obtained and now being sought are perfectly justified by rising living costs. But we are against "boom" wages in the defense program because they would only boomerang and hasten the destructive spiral of inflation.

"Tobacco Road" Not As Bad As Evils Exposed On Connecticut Farms

Hartford, Conn.—As the last of this season's bumper tobacco crop is being wheeled into drying sheds along the Connecticut River Valley north of this city, charges of "intolerable and disgraceful" living conditions reverberate across the denuded plastations. Following exhaustive investigations by Miss Ruth Purtell, of the State Labor Department, Commissioner Cornelius J. Danaher started a drive for legislation to improve the working conditions in this "highly industrialized agricultural industry" with the pledge:

"There'll be no 'Tobacco Road' in Connecticut if this department can stop it."

Employment of children under fourteen years of age and bad conditions in dormitories where Negro workers lived were the stated complaints, though the charges brought in by state investigators covered a much wider field of harvest evils.

Long hours, improper supervision and insufficient sanitary provisions that were dangerous to the "health, morals, safety and general welfare" of the workers were charged by the Labor Department. Although many complaints of maltreatment were filed, the department had no power to act because the tobacco fields are classified, the same as dairy farms, as cornfields, and every effort to pass laws protecting children engaged in agriculture has been defeated in the General Assembly.

Miss Purtell reported complaints that children as young as nine years of age were in the fields from 4:30 or 5 a. m. Other complaints included boys being kicked and beaten by bosses, children on the truck bringing them to work, young children being left to walk miles to their homes after working as long as twelve hours, and others being so crowded into trucks that they had to stand up in vehicles without tailboards.

In one case forty-six boys were brought from Florida and Georgia and housed in a building the Labor Department calls a barn. Deputy Commissioner Danaher is seeking a ruling from the United States Department of Labor on the legality of transporting under-age youths in this manner. It was said that in some cases parents did not know where their children had gone.

Gravedigging Policies of Hitler Must Be Stopped, Woll Declares

New York, N. Y.—Describing Germany as a nation of gravediggers that must be stopped by present methods, Matthew Woll, vice-president of the American Federation of Labor, told a congregation of 1,500 persons in the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, that the time has come for Americans to state their convictions on aid for the overthrow of the Nazis.

"Slave labor, slave wages under slave policies is Hitler's policy," he said. "Wherever he has gone men have no right of protest or strike." Woll cited the assassination of Pierre Laval as the expression of the true spirit of the French people. He said that not even the firing squad or the Gestapo can stop freedom of the press, speech and worship.

"Hitler's new order is a denial of the dignity of the human soul and of the Christian belief that 'God hath made of one blood all nations to dwell on the face of the earth together,'" declared Woll. "All principles deeply rooted in the Christian faith, rejects Hitler's new order. It will have none of it," he said.

Mr. Woll pointed to more than three million French, Belgium, Yugoslav, Greek and British war prisoners who are 'leased out' for 40 cents a day.

The labor leader said that he does not retract a single word against "the shameless tyranny of the godless Soviet regime," but that the confrontery of Hitler in asserting that he is suppressing Bolshevism deceives no one.

ENEMIES OF THE WORKERS ASSAILED AS GAULEITERS

Federal Security Administrator Paul V. McNutt declared that industrialists who would destroy the hard won rights of labor "have the morals of an oriental satrap or a Nazi gauleiter." He opposed tampering with these rights and contended that "collective bargaining is no longer a debatable issue in the United States."

ROOSEVELT ACTS AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Hyde Park, N. Y.—President Roosevelt moved to eliminate employment discrimination against Negroes and other minority racial groups. He directed all government departments to take "immediate steps" to assure "that in the Federal service the doors of employment are open to all loyal and qualified workers regardless of creed, race or national origin."

Roosevelt Names New Federal Agency To Spread Defense Contracts, Jobs

Washington, D. C.—Seeking to spread defense work and to prevent defense unemployment President Roosevelt issued an executive order setting up a division on contract distribution within the OPM and naming as its head Floyd B. Odlum, New York financier.

Functions of the new division are to provide for the more effective use of existing plant facilities; to provide for the conversion into defense production of civilian industries affected by priorities and raw material shortages; to alleviate unemployment caused by such priorities and shortages; to arrange local pooling of facilities and equipment; to promote subcontracting and to spread defense contracts among smaller business enterprises in every part of the nation.

The President said the OPM, through its new division, will be able more effectively to adjust dislocations and alleviate unemployment.

This will be done, the President said, by breaking down large orders of supplies, providing assistance in retraining and reemployment workers discharged because of the defense program.

Food Prices Soar to New Highs; Up 12 Percent In One Year

Washington, D. C.— Retail food prices reached "the highest level in ten years" on August 12, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported. It added that "the rise has been rapid" since August "the rise has continued."

Prices of basic foods increased an average of 1.2 per cent from July 15 to August 12, the bureau said, and were 12 per cent higher than a year ago.

The bureau's report attributed the increases to "many factors" but said "chief among them are increased employment with consequent greater consumer demand, large government purchases and some speculative buying."

Prices of bread and milk—two of the most important foods—advanced "quite generally" during the mid-July to mid-August period, and "substantial increases" were reported for eggs, oranges, navy beans, sugar, cheese and evaporated milk. Butter prices, however, were 25 per cent higher than a year ago.

Percentage changes for various foodstuffs were listed as follows: Cereals and bakery products, 0.9 increase; meats, 2.8 increase; dairy products, 2 increase; eggs, 5.2 increase; fruits and vegetables, 3.4 increase; beverages, 2.4 increase; fats and oils, 2. 7 increase; sugar, 1.1 increase.

AFL To Support Aid to Britain Until Victory Is Won, Green Tells Citrine

Washington, D. C.—The American Federation of Labor considers itself "inseparably associated" with British workers "in a common cause" and will support Britain "until victory and war is won," President William Green declared in a cablegram to the British Trades Union Congress, in convention in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Mr. Green also made public the cable from the British Trades Union Congress, signed by Sir Walter Citrine, secretary of that organization, pledging support "of every effort to promote practical cooperation with you for the achievement of victory" and assuring the A.F. of L. that what "American workers have already done" to lighten the burden of sacrifices which British workers are making.

The text of the two cablegrams follows:

Washington, D. C., Aug. 30, 1941.
Sir Walter Citrine, Secretary,
British Trades Union Congress,
Edinburgh, Scotland.

"I extend to those in attendance at the Trades Union Congress the fraternal greetings of the American Federation of Labor. We consider ourselves as inseparably associated with you in a common cause and purpose to establish and maintain democracy, freedom and liberty throughout the world. We are standing with our government in extension of support to Britain and her allies until it is our profound confidence that support until victory is won.

"WILLIAM GREEN, President,
American Federation of Labor."

Edinburgh, Sept. 4, 1941.
American Federation of Labor,
Washington, D.C.

"Congress received your fraternal message with great appreciation and finding in it the assurance of the solidarity of the English speaking peoples in the struggle to preserve the institutions of freedom and democracy which are our common inheritance and for the maintenance of which we are prepared to make every sacrifice.

"Congress pledges support of every effort to promote practical cooperation with you and for the achievement of victory. We welcome your promise of utmost help and are deeply grateful for what the American workers have already done to lighten the burden of sacrifice which the British workers are making in the common cause.

"WALTER CITRINE, Secretary,
Trades Union Congress."

Full Support of Defense Program Pledged by Painters Convention

Columbus, O.—Organized labor's continued support of the national defense program was pledged by the International Brotherhood of Painters, Decorations and Paperhangers of America as it met here for its sixteenth biennial convention.

More than a thousand delegates were present, setting an all-time attendance record. The convention will continue for two weeks, with headquarters in the Neil House and meeting in Memorial hall.

The delegates were representing a total of 1500 locals with more than 120,000 members in the United States and its territories and Canada.

At the convention's opening session the delegates were welcomed in talks by Governor John W. Bricker, George Strain, state director of industrial relations, and T. J. Donnelly, secretary of the Ohio State Federation of Labor.

The delegates heard official reports from General President L. P. Lindelof and General Secretary-Treasurer Clarence E. Swick, both of Lafayette, Ind., where the international has its headquarters. The reports covered activities of the international since its last convention at Buffalo in 1937.

The Painters' Brotherhood and organized labor as a whole have cooperated to the end that the national defense program shall not be retarded, Lindelof said in his report.

"Organized labor," he continued, "will not desist, but will continue this policy, asking in return only that none of the social-economic gains or achievements we have made be denied us and that our standards not be lowered during the present crisis or emergency through which we are passing."

Swick's report asserted that "self-constituted dictators have laid down the gauge and ours is the job of picking it up and carrying it to victory for Democracy. Organized labor must and will do its share in defending the free institutions it has helped establish."

INDIANAPOLIS HELD BIG LABOR DAY CELEBRATION

Indianapolis, Ind.—The Indianapolis Central Labor Union held a rousing Labor Day celebration at the Indiana State Fair Grounds. D. R. Hartsell, secretary of the central body and chairman of the Labor Day Committee, opened the meeting by introducing Lieut. Governor Charles M. Dawson, who made the welcoming address. The featured speaker was William C. Birthright, president of the Journeyman Barbers International Union and a vice president of the American Federation of Labor. The celebration was closed in the evening with a grand ball at the Claypool Hotel, which included a six-act floor show and the distribution of over 40 prizes.

News Briefs

WAGE HIKE RECOMMENDED FOR 4,000 BUS WORKERS

Washington, D. C.—An interstate bus industry committee set up under the Fair Labor Standards Act recommended a minimum wage of 40 cents an hour for employes of interstate bus companies. If the recommendation is approved by Brigadier-General Philip R. Fleming, administrator of the act, the wages of 4,000 out of 36,000 employes of the companies will be affected.

Four employe representatives on the committee joined with four public representatives in making the recommendation. The four employer members voted against it. Employe members included Horace A. Bacus, research director of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks.

EMPLOYMENT NOW AT ALL-TIME HIGH

Employment in business and industry jumped by another 380,000 workers during July to a new all-time high, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins reported.

In the past year, persons at work rose by 3,875,000 and nonagricultural payrolls now have 2,200,000 more workers than in July, 1929, Secretary Perkins declared.

FLEMING ABOLISHES FAKE BONUS SCHEMES

Washington, D. C.—Brigadier-General Philip B. Fleming, Administrator of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act, warned employers that fake bonus schemes to evade payment of time-and-one-half wages for overtime work will not be tolerated.

He explained that where bonuses are genuinely added to the wages of employes, they need not be considered in determining overtime compensation; but where so-called bonus payments as a smokescreen for cutting regular hour rates, or to reduce overtime costs, such chiseling will be regarded as a violation of the act.

PENNSYLVANIA REGISTERS BIG GAIN IN EMPLOYMENT

Philadelphia, Pa.—Employment in Pennsylvania reached an all-time high during August, having increased 30 per cent during the past year, it was reported by the Federal Reserve Bank for Philadelphia.

During the same period, the bank said, payrolls had expanded 70 per cent, while factory earnings of wage workers averaged 31 cents, the highest in history and an increase of 12 per cent above July, 1940.

Meanwhile unemployment fell to the lowest point since the crash of 1929, being 1,250,000 in 1941 as compared with 1,250,000 in 1933. Half of those now classified as jobless were declared to be unemployable.

MILITARY AIRCRAFT OUTPUT GAINED NEW HIGH IN AUGUST

Washington, D. C.—Defense officials and British supply officers here were cheered by the announcement from OPM that military aircraft deliveries by United States manufacturers in August reached an all-time high of 1,554, an increase of 294 over the preceding month and of 1,268 planes over August, 1940. This was welcomed not only because it represented the highest gain ever recorded in aircraft output but because it came in the midst of criticism of the whole defense production program.

The August production rate, if continued for twelve months, would mean a total annual output of about 22,250 planes, considerably short of the President's goal of 50,000 planes a year. But OPM expects further increases in the coming months and expected peak production about August, 1942.

AFL UNIT PROTESTS PAY DISCRIMINATION

Washington, D. C.—Officials of metal trades unions affiliated with the AFL protested that a bill continuing this policy, asking in return only that none of the social-economic gains or achievements we have made be denied us and that our standards not be lowered during the present crisis or emergency through which we are passing."

Swick's report asserted that "self-constituted dictators have laid down the gauge and ours is the job of picking it up and carrying it to victory for Democracy. Organized labor must and will do its share in defending the free institutions it has helped establish."

STRIKES REACH LOW POINT

The United States Department of Labor reported that strikes are at a low ebb, the figures refuting propaganda spread by enemies of organized labor. In July, the Department said, man-day losses due to strikes were 12 per cent below the monthly average for the last five years.

President To Name Emergency Body To Settle Railway Wage Dispute

CHICAGO FEDERATION WARS ON CROOKS

Chicago, Ill.—The Chicago Federation of Labor pledged a redoubling of its campaign to weed out crooks from unions in its territory.

In its official paper, the "Federation News," under the heading, "Drive the Rascals Out," the Federation declared:

"There is no place in organized labor for the racketeer, the chiseler, the fixer or the terrorist.

"We ask that Chicago organized labor, with many good and honorable record behind it, redouble itself to purging the ranks of the leeches who fatten at the expense of the workers."

BRITAIN WANTS U. S. CRAFTSMEN

McNutt Announces Offices Will Be Opened to Recruit Workers for Overseas Service

Washington, D. C.—Great Britain is about to undertake with the help of the United States Government a campaign to employ thousands of American technicians for service in England repairing vital equipment for the British armed forces.

Paul V. McNutt, Federal Security Administrator, announced the plan and said that the 1,500 Federal State employment offices would assist in it.

The British Civilian Technical Corps hopes, he said, to employ several thousand men between 18 and 50 years of age who are skilled as radio and automobile mechanics, electrical linemen, instrument repairers, metal workers and other technical trades.

"Recruitment of American workers for service with this non-combatant defense group in England is an important step in the Administration's program for increasing United States-British cooperation," Mr. McNutt declared. "The civilian technical corps is a non-military group of skilled craftsmen organized to maintain and repair radio location apparatus, communication systems and other vital technical equipment used by the naval, military and air forces."

Arrangements with the British Government, he said, provide for the return to this country of American members of the civilian technical corps at any time they are needed.

Selective Service Headquarters was informed that it was authorized local draft boards to grant deferments to men joining the British C. T. C. Mr. McNutt explained, however, that the employment services would not accept applications from men who apparently needed in key defense jobs in American industries.

The British Government will provide transportation to and from that country for Americans joining the C. T. C., the announcement said, and will furnish board, lodging, uniforms and medical care in addition to salaries ranging from $36 to $38 a week. The regular term of service will be for three years or the duration of the war, whichever is shorter.

Federal-State Employment offices throughout the country will interview applicants and refer likely prospects to C. T. C. headquarters in New York. Applicants must pass an examination and a physical test.

Mr. McNutt said Americans who join the C. T. C. would be performing a highly important service for this country as well as for England.

"They will get invaluable experience in the art of technical defense," he said. "We need that kind of experience here."

STATE EMPLOYMENT UNITS FIND WORK FOR 499,000

Washington, D. C.—The Federal Security Agency announced that 499,000 defense and non-defense jobs were filled by the State Employment Agencies during July. This was contrary to the usual June-July decline—six per cent more than during the previous month and 62 per cent above July of last year. Placements during the first seven months of 1941 totaled approximately 3,000,000 compared with 1,909,000 during the same period of 1940.

A. F. L. UNION CHOSEN BY INSURANCE AGENTS

Washington, D. C.—Agents employed by the Home Beneficial Life Insurance Company in Petersburg, Va., rolled up a large majority for the American Federation of Industrial and Ordinary Insurance Agents Union No. 22874, AFL affiliate, to represent them in collective bargaining at an election held by the National Labor Relations Board, George L. Russ, A. F. of L. organizer reported. This makes the fourth district to vote for the A. F. of L. union recently.

Nation-Wide Strike Authorized By Railroad Workers When Mediation Fails

Washington, D. C.—President Roosevelt will intervene in the nation-wide railway workers' wage dispute, under authority of the Railway Labor Act, and name an impartial commission to report findings of fact within thirty days.

This action will forestall a national railroad strike, crippling transportation, which was authorized by an overwhelming vote of 1,250,000 railroad workers.

George Harrison, president of the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks and head of the Railway Labor Executives Association, conferred with President Roosevelt at a White House conference that the workers will accept the findings of the special commission.

He told the President that while it was necessary to go through the formality of obtaining a strike vote, the railroad labor unions have no thought of tying up the national defense program or otherwise embarrassing the Government at this critical time.

The strike vote was taken after the National Mediation Board had failed in its efforts to settle the wage dispute.

Railway management has flatly refused to meet the demands of the 14 shopcraft unions, representing 900,000 employes, for hourly wage increases of 30 to 34 cents and two weeks vacation with pay. The management also refuses to grant the thirty per cent wage increase asked by the operating brotherhoods.

Under the Railway Labor Act, if mediation fails to settle a railway labor dispute, the President is empowered to declare an emergency and appoint a fact-finding commission to bring in recommendations for ending the dispute. In the past the findings of such commissions have been found satisfactory by railway labor.

HIGHER SALARIES URGED BY POST OFFICE CLERKS

St. Louis, Mo.—The convention of the National Federation of Post Office Clerks unanimously demanded a salary increase—$2,600 to $3,000—and rates of $1 per hour for substitutes for the first year's service with annual hourly pay increases as provided in the Whelchel Bill, H.R. 1641. In computing the graduated hourly rate the salary grades of $2,600 to $3,000 would be used instead of the present grades of $1,700 to $2,100.

Salary increases for the post office clerks and city delivery carriers generally were favored by President William Green of the American Federation of Labor, in an address to the convention. He said that civil service employees, as well as those in private industry, are entitled to wage increases as they too must meet the high cost of living.

President Leo E. George, Legislative Representative Wm. L. Horner and Secretary-Treasurer Vince Miles were reelected without opposition.

NEW JERSEY A. F. L. BARS PRINTERS UNION DELEGATES

Newark, N. J.—Mayor Vincent J. Murphy, secretary-treasurer of the New Jersey State Federation of Labor, notified sixteen International Typographical Union locals in New Jersey that their delegates would not be seated at the sixty-third annual convention of the state federation in Atlantic City.

Mayor Murphy said that he took the action on instructions from William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor. He sent copies of Mr. Green's telegram to officers of the typographical locals. He said that Mr. Green had stated that typographical unions were to be denied representation by all state, county and central labor groups affiliated with the A. F. of L. because the International Typographical Union voted two months ago in a nation-wide referendum against reaffiliation with the A. F. of L.

"We accept their verdict," Mr. Green's telegram stated.

The ruling deprived Charles Testerman, of Camden, a member of the state federation's executive board for ten years, of his place and left the position open for the election scheduled for Wednesday. Mr. Testerman was one of fifteen typographical union delegates who had signified his intention to attend the convention, Mayor Murphy said.

D. OF C. MILK DRIVERS UNIONIZE ALL COMPANIES

Washington, D. C.—Spokesmen for the Milk Drivers' and Dairy Employes Local No. 246 reported that the dairy industry here was completely unionized after a union contract was signed by the Highland Farms Dairy.